

Emotional Reactions

Not everyone will have an emotional reaction to flood situations. Those who do will react in their own unique way. Some common emotional reactions may include:

- Recurring dreams or nightmares about the flood
- Trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Feeling numb, withdrawn or disconnected
- Having bursts of anger or intense irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms such as headaches, digestive problem, muscle tension
- Being overprotective of your family's safety
- Avoiding reminders of the flood
- Being tearful or crying for no apparent reason

Tips for Managing Stress and Anxiety

Some useful suggestions for coping with stress and anxiety stemming from the flood include:

- **Take care of your body**—alternate periods of exercise with relaxation
- **Share your stress**—discuss your feelings with others
- **Sleep and diet**—the better rested and nourished you are, the better equipped you are to tackle your stress
- **Get back to your normal routine**—which is especially important for children
- **Recognize your limits**—learn to accept that you are not capable of doing everything
- **Stay busy**—physically and mentally, but prioritize your time by making a task list in the order they need to be accomplished
- **Use spirituality** or your personal beliefs
- **Keep a sense of humor**
- **Express yourself** through writing, poetry, drawing
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs**—neither help manage stress

Effects on Children

Children are especially vulnerable both during and after a disaster. Younger children may become clingy with parents, scared to sleep alone or show aggressive behaviors at home or school. Older youths may have delinquent behaviors, defiance, social withdrawal or decline in school performance. Children, as well as adults, need to express themselves. It is important to encourage all survivors to talk about their experience.

- **Provide time** for closeness
- **Monitor media** exposure to disaster trauma
- **Maintain routines** as much as possible
- **Spend time** with family and friends
- **Involve children** in preparation of family emergency kits and home drills
- **Encourage exercise** and physical activities
- **Set gentle but firm limits** for acting out behaviors





No one who lives through a disaster is untouched by the experience. Disasters can threaten our sense of control and safety, and can affect many aspects of our lives.

The emotional effects from loss or damage to homes, loss of family pets, and displacement from neighbors, friends and support systems can cause unusual stress as people begin to rebuild their lives. Just as it can take months to rebuild damaged buildings, it takes time to grieve losses and rebuild lives.

The goal of the Pro WV Crisis Counseling Program is to provide survivors with support and information as well as empower people to regain control of their lives. Crisis counseling helps disaster survivors recognize normal stress reactions.

All services offered by PRO WV are free of charge.

For more information about the PRO WV Crisis Counseling Program, please contact:

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